

Pam. misc.

“A BURNING QUESTION.”

W. T. HARRIS, PH. D., LL. D.

POLYGAMY AND CITIZENSHIP IN CHURCH AND STATE.

BY DR. SAMUEL SPAHR LAWS.

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NOTICES AND TESTIMONIALS.

1. THE BALTIMORE AMERICAN.—“The three main features of the discussion in this volume are: (1) The relation of the subject to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church; (2) to the Bible and the primitive church; and (3) to the latest evolutionary history of the family. The author claims that the positive teaching of the Bible is that the conjugal relation was originally ordained by God at man’s creation between two—one man and one woman. Also that the Saviour did not claim to institute a new ordinance, but reaffirmed the original ordinance of monogamy as still in force, and as the law of his kingdom.”

2. Dr. F. J. BROOKE, ROMNEY, W. VA.—“You have certainly done a good work for the Truth, the Church, the For-

eign Mission cause of all churches, and for Humanity, and God will surely bless it, whether we ever accomplish the immediate purpose in hand or not, *i. e.*, extirpating the sin [of polygamy] from our own missions.”

3. Dr. DAVID WILLS, JR., OSWEGO, N. Y.—“In *Polygamy and Citizenship in Church and State* you have written wisely on a timely theme. Your vigorous defense of the Biblical idea of personal and church purity cannot fail to be productive of great good. All who love righteousness and truth must be grateful to you for your devout and scholarly work.”

4. Dr. ROBERT P. KERR, BALTIMORE, MD.—“I thank you for sending me your exhaustive treatment of the subject of Polygamy. Your argument is unanswerable. I do not see how any man can advocate the reception of a polygamous convert (?) into the Presbyterian Church. The laws of Christ are for all races, all ages, all conditions, and admit of no exceptions nor temporary suspension. It would be just as logical to say that converts might be allowed for a while to commit theft or murder.

“Surely this is no time to abate the rigor of the law of marriage, when progressive polygamy has become so common in our country as to threaten the permanence of our institutions.

“I hope the General Assembly will speak in no uncertain way.”

5. Dr. WALLACE RADCLIFFE, WASHINGTON, D. C.—“I have read with great interest your *Polygamy and Citizenship*. It is true. It is masterly. It is unanswerable. You have rendered a great service by such a clear and comprehensive

statement of the subject and by your calm and irrefutable argument. I can very well understand how a missionary may be tempted to expediencies in some individual case, but I cannot understand how a church court could hesitate or evade when the case was so strongly presented. We northern Presbyterians are supposed to be 'worldly,' and 'secular,' and 'purely ethical,' but we have a better record on this subject than our spiritual brethren of the South. I congratulate you upon a fine piece of work and a stalwart conscience."

6. Dr. B. F. BITTINGER, WASHINGTON, D. C.—"I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your *Polygamy and Citizenship*, and although I have not read it carefully, I have read sufficient of it to convince me that your argument from the scriptures, by which you fortify your contention, seems to be conclusive. How far expediency enters into the question I am not prepared to say. The question itself is a difficult and troublesome one, and for adjudication requires great tact, tenderness, and wisdom.

"Your argument itself, however, is hard to refute."

7. Dr. M. B. RIDDLE, professor in Allegheny Theological Seminary and a member of the Bible Revision Committee. His attention was called to this treatise by a mutual friend, who is a Presbyterian, a Yale alumnus and LL.D., and a well known government official, to whom Professor Riddle wrote: "You can tell him [the author] from me, that he seems to be right in his contention, and that the Presbyterian Church (South) does not appear to advantage in the controversy and in its deliverances."

This mutual friend writes the author: "I have read nearly all your book, and much of it out loud to Mrs. W. [a South-

ern lady]. There is but one side to your question, and I am ashamed of the Southern Presbyterian Church."

A colonel in the regular army, a Kentuckian, says that he and his wife have read it together with great interest. It is profitable and novel reading for all in the conjugal relation, as well as for the unmarried.

8. Dr. W. T. HARRIS, for nearly twenty years Commissioner of the United States Bureau of Education.—"My dear Dr. Laws, I beg to acknowledge a copy of the 'Polygamy and Citizenship in Church and State,' which came duly from you, and according to promise. I am always glad to have any monograph from your hand. I am particularly glad to have this discussion of a burning question."

9. Rev. Dr. DAVID WILLS, SR., now a retired chaplain of the regular U. S. Army, but long a resident of the South and minister of the Southern Presbyterian Church, a graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina, co-pastor of Dr. Smythe, of Charleston, S. C., and at one time president of Oglethorpe University, Georgia. This devoted friend of the Southern Presbyterian Church took such interest in this discussion that he read it in the proof whilst it was going through the press, and encouraged the author with his cordial and unqualified approval. No one was more surprised than he at the disposition of the subject by the General Assembly and the Synod of Virginia. One of the most notable foreign missionary conventions of the year meets annually at Clifton Springs, N. Y., in June, and enjoys the generous hospitality of that Sanitarium. Dr. Wills was present at that convention, June, 1906, and assisted Dr. Mal-

colm in distributing among the missionaries a package of the book which had been shipped there for that purpose. Dr. Wills writes: "All were glad to receive them [the books], and have unanimously agreed, so far as I could ascertain, that polygamists cannot be admitted to church membership anywhere without abandoning all but one wife, and she the one first married.

"Dr. Hunter Corbett, the (Missionary) Moderator of the Northern General Assembly (1906) read your book. We spent an hour on Sunday afternoon in discussing the subject of polygamy in heathen lands. He says you are on the right line, and that the church will come to your ground sooner or later, and that, therefore, your valuable work will tell effectively on the future missions of the church.

"I herewith inclose the testimonies I gathered from the missionaries in India, China, Japan, and one from Bishop Pennick, of the Diocese of Virginia, who has charge of his church missions in Africa. You are powerfully supported in your views by the leading missionaries from one end of the heathen world to the other." Inclosed were five cards with six names, concisely expressing decided views, and not a discordant note was heard. It was regretted that more books were not sent, as they were eagerly sought after. A thousand copies were printed, but they are diminishing, and persons write the author, not knowing where they can be obtained.

10. As illustrating the reformatory power of the truth, the following incident may be given. It is contained in a letter from Dr. Brooke to the author, in a letter dated June 29th, 1906: "Let me congratulate you upon *the first fruit of the*

polygamy overture. The *Kassai Herald*, published by our African Mission at Luebo, for April, 1906, has this:
 At a meeting of the missionaries, March 1—6, 1906: "The reports as rendered from the field were of the most encouraging kind, yet there was a recognition *on the part of all present* that the goal of our hopes had not been fully attained. Nowhere was the truth of this assertion more fully seen than in the earnest, prayerful consideration over the subjects of Polygamy and Self-support. *Against the former the door of church membership was closed*, while the latter had plans and methods set in operation looking toward a fuller realization of that ideal."

11. REV. DR. THOMAS CHALMERS EASTON, pastor of Eastern Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C.—"Rev. and Beloved Brother: I have read over carefully your able controversial pamphlet, entitled '*Polygamy and Citizenship*,' and must say your position is unassailable, scriptural, and will stand the severest criticism.

"Years from now, not many, all churches and ministers must stand upon the rock foundation where your able book would have them placed. Divorce legislation, marriage laws, and other matters pertaining to the family, need revision the world over.

"Thanks for your noble contribution to the literature on this most important and living question of the day."

12. THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.—This is one of our Southern Presbyterian Church papers that has spoken out in advocacy of the General Assembly making a deliverance on the subject of polygamy in accordance with the constitution of the church touching morals and personal righteousness.

MAY 16, 1906: "A volume of more than two hundred pages, entitled 'Polygamy and Citizenship in Church and State,' by Dr. Samuel Spahr Laws, is before us. It is probably the most complete discussion of the subject that has ever been published. Dr. Laws' extensive and varied learning, and his familiarity with sources of information, eminently qualify him for the task that he has accomplished. The discussion bears upon an overture on this subject that goes before the Assembly in session at Greenville. There seems to be no substantial reason why the Assembly should not distinctly declare that in the reception of communicants into the church in foreign fields the standards of the church upon all questions of morals shall be respected and enforced; or else refer the entire subject to an *ad interim* committee instructed to prepare a formal paper for final consideration and adoption."

Rev. Dr. E. M. Green, Danville, Ky., Moderator of the Southern General Assembly, 1898, and Chairman of Commission on Polygamy, 1906:

" * Your vast labor in connection with this matter has not been wasted. You have given us an exhaustive discussion of the subject which is learned and valuable, and your end has probably been accomplished, though the complaint was not sustained. * * * Am thankful that you have been spared to do such vigorous work for the church."*